



## **Practical and Inexpensive Tips for Crisis Preparation**

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### **Communication**

- Only have the President and Director of News and Information serve as spokespersons. All information must be approved by the President, recommended by Senior Leadership Members and posted only by the Director of News and Information. You must control your messages.
- Have a mirror website that can go up within 20 minutes in case your server is down. (e.g. [www.uuemergency.com](http://www.uuemergency.com)) During a crisis is not the time to register and build a new site.
- Have a hard copy of important phone numbers and a cell phone listing of your staff members. Also make sure that you have entered these numbers into your cell phone. Keep a hard copy of these numbers with you at all times.
- Have a phone tree. Know who calls you and who you call.
- In all communication, make sure the information is concise and presented in brief bullet points. Use FAQ's whenever possible.
- In the time after a crisis, request that your staff place an auto-reply on their e-mail and voicemail detailing other numbers or instructions on where they can be reached, if they will be unable to respond to messages for days.
- Make forms web-based for student and administrative access. We had a web based form for student collection data (new housing info, car status, gift card distribution.) Students,

faculty and staff could be anywhere and input data via the web with an administrative password.

- Have a charger in your emergency bag or kit. Charge your phone every night and carry it with you. (Some of you are bad about charging and keeping track of your cell phones.)
- Be sure that your leadership team has an alternate e-mail account (e.g. [KimberlyThornbury@yahoo.com](mailto:KimberlyThornbury@yahoo.com)) in case your server is down and you need a way to send messages. Safety & Security sends this list to all members each fall, which allows you to “reply all” to the group if needed in an emergency.
- Make sure that you have a Bullhorn available. (Be sure to change the batteries annually.)
- Decide which local vendor numbers you need. (Wal-Mart, Lowe’s, a sign company, a copy center, Target, your architect, all local officials, phone numbers of all embassies for international students on campus.
- Try and get most classes/lectures on DVD or easily convertible to Blackboard or e-campus. If you can't physically return to campus after a crisis, you must be able to salvage tuition revenue by providing an immediate way to deliver classes in an alternative format.

#### **Staff Assignments/Job Responsibilities**

- Create a giant checklist with who is responsible for what (accountability and ease of communication flow.) (e.g. who calls for port-o-potties, who gets food for volunteers, who is the main contact person for the care of families at the hospital, who arranges to get more cell phones and instant modems.)
- Never assume anyone is going to do it. Assign responsibilities by name. (Your crisis plan won’t cover everything. Make decisions, make good clear decisions. I know in Student Development we are all about consensus, but a crisis doesn’t afford too much time for discussion on certain matters. Be bold and use common sense.)
- Create a “Starbucks” spirit. Say “yes” whenever possible. Constantly support, encourage and say thank you.

#### **Emergency Kits/Supplies**

- Emergency Trunk (we had this, but didn’t use it.) It was helpful in the Texas A&M Crisis.

- Examples of what to include in trunk: Trash bags, extension cords, toilet paper, paper towels, saline solutions, tampons, handiwipes, safety glasses, flashlight, water, light snacks (raisins, granola bars), plenty of pens, notebooks, 2 phone books, maps, institutional fact sheets, emergency numbers, toothpaste and toothbrushes, ibuprofen, band-aids, floss, tissues. (Hey, we looked organized!) This trunk is more for the care of Senior Leadership and others who won't go home for days.
- Emergency Bags (we used messenger bags) for each RD/Building.
  - Binder with updated floor plans, "priority #'s" (President, Senior Leadership, RA cells, emergency room numbers). Emergency contact info for all students (important in case your university network/server goes down.)
  - Residence Life Supplies
    - Mini-flashlights for EACH RA (change batteries each year or get LED flashlights.)
    - Key box with master keys
    - Key rings for keys to go on RA's wrists
    - Small First Aid Kit
    - Emergency Bag (with reflectors)
    - Whistle
    - Walkie-Talkies
    - Bull Horn
    - Reflective Tape (Reflective Jackets to look "official")
    - NOAA weather radio
- On your residential student what to bring list, have them bring \$40(ish) weather radio. Of course, your Safety & Security office and RD's should have one as well.
- Be aware of trends in your area, just in case you need to act fast in the time of a crisis. (Ex. designing new residence complexes in 24 hours)

### **Crisis Plan**

- LDI Publications offers a great out of the box crisis plan if you are in need of a serious overhaul and no one has time to springboard it.  
<http://www.shoplrp.com/product/p-31099.3RD.html>
- More Expensive Tip: Have a text messaging system. We use OTair.com and it's about \$2,500 a year. Students love it. (And parents are able to sign up with the service as well.)